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Robert Kilwardby on the Human Soul :Plurality of Forms and Censorship in the Thirteenth Century by José Filipe Silva (Review)

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Published in:
Journal of the History of Philosophy

DOI:
[10.1353/hph.2014.0035](https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2014.0035)

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2014

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
de Boer, S. (2014). *Robert Kilwardby on the Human Soul :Plurality of Forms and Censorship in the Thirteenth Century* by José Filipe Silva (Review). *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 52(2), 375-376. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2014.0035>

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Robert Kilwardby on the Human Soul: Plurality of Forms and Censorship in the Thirteenth Century by José Filipe Silva (review)

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Journal of the History of Philosophy, Volume 52, Number 2, April 2014,
pp. 375-376 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/hph.2014.0035



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monides has a consistent theory of parable that allows us to unlock some of the secrets of the *Guide*, one cannot think of a better presentation of the skeptical thesis than the present book. Even the skeptics will profit from the philosophically rich analyses in this book.

CHARLES H. MANEKIN

University of Maryland

José Filipe Silva. *Robert Kilwardby on the Human Soul: Plurality of Forms and Censorship in the Thirteenth Century*. Investigating Medieval Philosophy, 3. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012. Pp. xii + 313. Cloth, \$203.00.

Until very recently, Robert Kilwardby was known mostly as the Dominican archbishop who in 1277 condemned Aquinas's position on the unicity of substantial form in Oxford. Although his (early) logical writings have received ample attention in the past few decades, this, arguably, had little impact on the overall perception of Kilwardby. Silva's monograph aims to revise this picture by giving a detailed account of Kilwardby's views on the human soul and cognition, aspects of his thought that have so far received little attention. It should be mentioned that this important project of fleshing out Kilwardby's own philosophical views has been continued by the recently published *Companion to the Philosophy of Robert Kilwardby* (Brill, 2013), edited by Henrik Lagerlund and Paul Thom, to which Silva also contributed.

The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with Kilwardby's views on the ontological structure of human beings; the second deals with his theory of knowledge; and the third and smallest part relates the findings from part 1 to the Oxford prohibitions. In the first part, Silva gives a detailed and nuanced account of Kilwardby's views, showing the different layers of ontological complexity Kilwardby introduces in human beings, both on the level of the soul and on the level of the body. The analysis more than adequately supports one of Silva's main theses, namely that "Kilwardby was not an anti-Aristotelian, but an Augustinian who was also an Aristotelian" (18), although he sides with Augustine whenever there are irreconcilable differences.

Part 2 addresses the processes involved in cognition, and is divided into two subparts: on sense perception and on intellectual cognition. The part on sense cognition presents further evidence of Kilwardby's attempt at providing an account of the human soul and its functions that is compatible with both Aristotle and Augustine, and Silva's account is again thorough and convincing. The part on intellectual cognition, by contrast, deals with such a great variety of topics that it tends to lose some focus at times, and the end result is more of a broad overview than an in-depth study of the topic. Among the many topics addressed are angelic cognition, language, theories of illumination, Kilwardby's conception of scientific knowledge and truth, and the Trinitarian model for the soul.

Throughout the book, Silva mentions his desire to understand Kilwardby's motivations for issuing his prohibitions as the primary motivation to study his views on the soul and cognition. Perhaps this is why the prohibitions feature so prominently in the book's title. Nevertheless, the third part is best viewed as an appendix to the detailed discussion of Kilwardby's views of the structure of human beings undertaken in part 1. Partly because of the high quality of the analysis in the first two parts, it is also somewhat disappointing. On the positive side, Silva succeeds at (re)establishing that it is highly unlikely that Kilwardby's prohibitions were directed mainly or even primarily at Thomas Aquinas. Rather, it seems he wanted to reject any theory that failed to provide the required ontological complexity within the human soul, without necessarily having one particular variant in mind. On the negative side, a full analysis of all sixteen prohibited propositions *in naturalibus* is curiously absent; in fact, not even all are listed. One would at least expect a more detailed discussion of proposition 16 in this context: "that the intellective soul is united to prime matter in such a way that it corrupts all that preceded all the way down to prime matter," since the link with Aquinas's views is (and has been) so easily made. Moreover, Silva seems to fol-

low a still-common misrepresentation of the council of Vienne (1311–12) when he writes that it “would elect the Thomist unicity thesis as the official doctrine of the Church” (5). It did not. Rather it merely condemned the position that the intellective soul is not truly and per se the form of the body, without directly commenting on the unicity or plurality of forms debate. This is why the Franciscan Gerard of Odo, for instance, was able to frame the Council’s decree as one in favor of a plurality of forms.

This criticism aside, two general features of Silva’s monograph are especially noteworthy. The first is the impressively wide range of Kilwardby’s writings that it is based on. The second is its sensitivity to the relations between the debates on the structure of the human soul and other contexts, not only that of theology (for example, the incarnation of Christ, the transmission of original sin, angelic cognition), but also that of natural philosophy more generally. The main parts of the book are well argued and clearly written. In sum, it deserves to be read by everyone interested in the medieval history of philosophical psychology.

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Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller, and Matthias Perkams, editors. *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 275. Cloth, \$95.00.

The main question addressed in this volume is to what extent did Thomas Aquinas “deal with and depend on Aristotle’s Ethics” (1). The editors and contributors discuss the setting and intent of Thomas’s commentary (*Sententiae supra libros Ethicorum*) on the text of Aristotle, which was likely completed during his magisterial activity at Paris in 1271–72. They consider various scholarly opinions on the commentary, including those concerning its date of composition and whether Thomas expresses his own views, or merely provides a careful exposition of Aristotle’s text. An important topic for all contributors is the consideration of the commentary in light of Thomas’s theological treatises, especially the *Summa theologiae*, in order to understand how Thomas’s reading of Aristotle’s moral philosophy contributes to his own understanding of important issues in ethics.

The first two articles by Terrence Irwin and Michael Pakaluk discuss the accuracy and general approach of Thomas toward Aristotle. Both rightly indicate that Thomas does not approach Aristotle in the manner of a modern scholar who seeks faithfully to explain the text, but rather as a way to discover truth. Although Thomas always attempts to comprehend Aristotle’s thought thoroughly, he does not hesitate to indicate its limits when compared to religious belief. Thomas is generally reluctant to criticize Aristotle directly and often provides a charitable reading for controversial ideas. When discussing the question of the possibility of perfect beatitude, Thomas claims that Aristotle refrained from such a discussion in Ethics, because the fate of the separate soul belongs to a different science. Irwin concludes that we ought to take Thomas seriously as a historically accurate interpreter of Aristotle, even if he does introduce un-Aristotelian topics, such as the will, into his understanding of Aristotle (30).

Jörn Müller’s article builds upon his earlier work on Albert the Great on the relation between happiness and beatitude. Müller claims that Aristotle offers “not one unified account of happiness, but rather a ‘two-fold happiness’” (55). Albert did indeed accept the notion of two distinct types of happiness (*due felicitates*), but Thomas rejects this interpretation in favor of one that views Aristotelian *eudaimonia* as the single perfection of human beings within a lifetime. Müller indicates the importance of the qualification by Aristotle that human beings can only be *beati ut homines* for Thomas’s view that perfect beatitude may be attained in the afterlife (62). Here Müller believes that Thomas seems brazenly to ignore Aristotle’s designation of the contemplative life as perfect happiness. Thomas, however, did not have so much difficulty in showing that the philosophical life does not meet the criterion for ultimate finality and self-sufficiency, since he finds support in Aristotle’s own